United Nations A/55/615

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 November 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 165

Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

Report of the Sixth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Drahoslav **Štefánek** (Slovakia)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal" was included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly decision 54/429 of 9 December 1999.

2. At its 9th plenary meeting, on 11 September 2000, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the Sixth Committee.

3. The Sixth Committee considered the item at its 8th and 31st meetings, on 16 October and 16 November 2000. The views of the representatives who spoke during the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.6/55/SR.8 and 31).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.6/55/L.18

4. At the 31st meeting, on 16 November, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on behalf of France, Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal" (A/C.6/55/L.18).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.6/55/L.18 without a vote (see para. 6).

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III. Recommendation of the Sixth Committee

6. The Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

The General Assembly,

Acknowledging with gratitude the important contribution which the United Nations Administrative Tribunal ("the Tribunal") has made to the functioning of the United Nations system and commending the members of the Tribunal on their valuable work,

Desiring to assist the Tribunal in carrying out its future work as effectively as possible,

Noting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the administration of justice at the United Nations,[1]

Noting also the need to consider the appropriateness of the establishment of an appeals mechanism in relation to the decisions of the Tribunal,

Recognizing that, in appointing members of the Tribunal, the General Assembly should take into account the need to ensure adequate representation on the Tribunal of the principal legal systems of the world and fair geographical representation, and bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to amend the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal ("the Statute"), with effect from 1 January 2001, as follows:

(a) Article 3, paragraph 1, shall be amended to read as follows:

"The Tribunal shall be composed of seven members, no two of whom may be nationals of the same State. Members shall possess the requisite qualifications and experience, including, as appropriate, legal qualifications and experience. Only three members shall sit in any particular case";

(b) Article 3, paragraph 2, shall be amended to read as follows:

"The members shall be appointed by the General Assembly for four years and may be reappointed once. A member appointed to replace a member whose term of office has not expired shall hold office for the remainder of his or her predecessor's term, and may be reappointed once";

(c) A new article 8 shall be inserted, to read as follows:

"Where the three members of the Tribunal sitting in any particular case consider that the case raises a significant question of law, they may, at any time before they render judgement, refer the case for consideration by the whole Tribunal. The quorum for a hearing by the whole Tribunal shall be five members";

[1] See A/55/57.

(d) Former articles 8 to 13 of the Statute shall be renumbered 9 to 14, and references to those articles shall be amended accordingly;

(e) The pronouns "he" and "his", wherever they appear in the Statute, shall be amended to read "he or she" or "his or her", respectively;

(f) In article 7, paragraph 7, and in renumbered article 11, paragraph 4, references to "five official languages" shall be amended to read "six official languages";

2. *Also decides* that members serving on the Tribunal as at 1 January 2001 shall have their current term of office extended by one year, and that thereafter, provided that they have not served on the Tribunal for more than seven years, they may be reappointed once;

3. *Further decides* that the Statute, with effect from 1 January 2001, shall read as it appears in the annex to the present resolution.

Annex

Statute of the Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations

Article 1

A Tribunal is established by the present Statute to be known as the United Nations Administrative Tribunal.

Article 2

1. The Tribunal shall be competent to hear and pass judgement upon applications alleging non-observance of contracts of employment of staff members of the Secretariat of the United Nations or of the terms of appointment of such staff members. The words "contracts" and "terms of appointment" include all pertinent regulations and rules in force at the time of alleged non-observance, including the staff pension regulations.

2. The Tribunal shall be open:

(a) To any staff member of the Secretariat of the United Nations even after his or her employment has ceased, and to any person who has succeeded to the staff member's rights on his or her death;

(b) To any other person who can show that he or she is entitled to rights under any contract or terms of appointment, including the provisions of staff regulations and rules upon which the staff member could have relied.

3. In the event of a dispute as to whether the Tribunal has competence, the matter shall be settled by the decision of the Tribunal.

4. The Tribunal shall not be competent, however, to deal with any applications where the cause of complaint arose prior to 1 January 1950.

Article 3

1. The Tribunal shall be composed of seven members, no two of whom may be nationals of the same State. Members shall possess the requisite qualifications

and experience, including, as appropriate, legal qualifications and experience. Only three members shall sit in any particular case.

2. The members shall be appointed by the General Assembly for four years and may be reappointed once. A member appointed to replace a member whose term of office has not expired shall hold office for the remainder of his or her predecessor's term, and may be reappointed once.

3. The Tribunal shall elect its President and its two Vice-Presidents from among its members.

4. The Secretary-General shall provide the Tribunal with an Executive Secretary and such other staff as may be considered necessary.

5. No member of the Tribunal can be dismissed by the General Assembly unless the other members are of the unanimous opinion that he or she is unsuited for further service.

6. In case of a resignation of a member of the Tribunal, the resignation shall be addressed to the President of the Tribunal for transmission to the Secretary-General. This last notification makes the place vacant.

Article 4

The Tribunal shall hold ordinary sessions at dates to be fixed by its rules, subject to there being cases on its list which, in the opinion of the President, justify holding the session. Extraordinary sessions may be convoked by the President when required by the cases on the list.

Article 5

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall make the administrative arrangements necessary for the functioning of the Tribunal.

2. The expenses of the Tribunal shall be borne by the United Nations.

Article 6

1. Subject to the provisions of the present Statute, the Tribunal shall establish its rules.

2. The rules shall include provisions concerning:

(a) Election of the President and Vice-Presidents;

(b) Composition of the Tribunal for its sessions;

(c) Presentation of applications and the procedure to be followed in respect to them;

(d) Intervention by persons to whom the Tribunal is open under paragraph 2 of article 2, whose rights may be affected by the judgement;

(e) Hearing, for purposes of information, of persons to whom the Tribunal is open under paragraph 2 of article 2, even though they are not parties to the case, and generally;

(f) Other matters relating to the functioning of the Tribunal.

Article 7

1. An application shall not be receivable unless the person concerned has previously submitted the dispute to the joint appeals body provided for in the Staff Regulations and the latter has communicated its opinion to the Secretary-General, except where the Secretary-General and the applicant have agreed to submit the application directly to the Administrative Tribunal.

2. In the event of the joint body's recommendations being favourable to the application submitted to it, and insofar as this is the case, an application to the Tribunal shall be receivable if the Secretary-General has:

(a) Rejected the recommendations;

(b) Failed to take any action within thirty days following the communication of the opinion;

(c) Failed to carry out the recommendations within thirty days following the communication of the opinion.

3. In the event that the recommendations made by the joint body and accepted by the Secretary-General are unfavourable to the applicant, and insofar as this is the case, the application shall be receivable, unless the joint body unanimously considers that it is frivolous.

4. An application shall not be receivable unless it is filed within ninety days reckoned from the respective dates and periods referred to in paragraph 2 above, or within ninety days reckoned from the date of the communication of the joint body's opinion containing recommendations unfavourable to the applicant. If the circumstance rendering the application receivable by the Tribunal, pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 above, is anterior to the date of announcement of the first session of the Tribunal, the time limit of ninety days shall begin to run from that date. Nevertheless, the said time limit on his or her behalf shall be extended to one year if the heirs of a deceased staff member or the trustee of a staff member who is not in a position to manage his or her own affairs, file the application in the name of the said staff member.

5. In any particular case, the Tribunal may decide to suspend the provisions regarding time limits.

6. The filing of an application shall not have the effect of suspending the execution of the decision contested.

7. Applications may be filed in any of the six official languages of the United Nations.

Article 8

Where the three members of the Tribunal sitting in any particular case consider that the case raises a significant question of law, they may, at any time before they render judgement, refer the case for consideration by the whole Tribunal. The quorum for a hearing by the whole Tribunal shall be five members.

Article 9

The oral proceedings of the Tribunal shall be held in public unless the Tribunal decides that exceptional circumstances require that they be held in private.

Article 10

1. If the Tribunal finds that the application is well founded, it shall order the rescinding of the decision contested or the specific performance of the obligation invoked. At the same time, the Tribunal shall fix the amount of compensation to be paid to the applicant for the injury sustained should the Secretary-General, within thirty days of the notification of the judgement, decide, in the interest of the United Nations, that the applicant shall be compensated without further action being taken in his or her case, provided that such compensation shall not exceed the equivalent of two years' net base salary of the applicant. The Tribunal may, however, in exceptional cases, when it considers it justified, order the payment of a higher indemnity. A statement of the reasons for the Tribunal's decision shall accompany each such order.

2. Should the Tribunal find that the procedure prescribed in the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules has not been observed, it may, at the request of the Secretary-General and prior to the determination of the merits of the case, order the case remanded for institution or correction of the required procedure. Where a case is remanded, the Tribunal may order the payment of compensation, which is not to exceed the equivalent of three months' net base salary, to the applicant for such loss as may have been caused by the procedural delay.

3. In all applicable cases, compensation shall be fixed by the Tribunal and paid by the United Nations or, as appropriate, by the specialized agency participating under article 14.

Article 11

1. The Tribunal shall take all decisions by a majority vote.

2. Subject to the provisions of article 12, the judgements of the Tribunal shall be final and without appeal.

3. The judgements shall state the reasons on which they are based.

4. The judgements shall be drawn up, in any of the six official languages of the United Nations, in two originals, which shall be deposited in the archives of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

5. A copy of the judgement shall be communicated to each of the parties in the case. Copies shall also be made available on request to interested persons.

Article 12

The Secretary-General or the applicant may apply to the Tribunal for a revision of a judgement on the basis of the discovery of some fact of such a nature as to be a decisive factor, which fact was, when the judgement was given, unknown to the Tribunal and also to the party claiming revision, always provided that such ignorance was not due to negligence. The application must be made within thirty days of the discovery of the fact and within one year of the date of the judgement.

Clerical or arithmetical mistakes in judgements, or errors arising therein from any accidental slip or omission, may at any time be corrected by the Tribunal either of its own motion or on the application of any of the parties.

Article 13

The present Statute may be amended by decision of the General Assembly.

Article 14

1. The competence of the Tribunal shall be extended to the staff of the Registry of the International Court of Justice upon the exchange of letters between the President of the Court and the Secretary-General of the United Nations establishing the relevant conditions.

2. The Tribunal shall be competent to hear and pass judgement upon applications alleging non-observance of the regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund arising out of the decision of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board submitted to the Tribunal by:

(a) Any staff member of a member organization of the Pension Fund which has accepted the jurisdiction of the Tribunal in Pension Fund cases who is eligible under article 21 of the regulations of the Fund as a participant in the Fund, even if his or her employment has ceased, and any person who has acceded to such staff member's rights upon his or her death;

(b) Any other person who can show that he or she is entitled to rights under the regulations of the Pension Fund by virtue of the participation in the Fund of a staff member of such member organization.

3. The competence of the Tribunal may be extended to any specialized agency brought into relationship with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter upon the terms established by a special agreement to be made with each such agency by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Each such special agreement shall provide that the agency concerned shall be bound by the judgements of the Tribunal and be responsible for the payment of any compensation awarded by the Tribunal in respect of a staff member of that agency and shall include, inter alia, provisions concerning the agency's participation in the administrative arrangements for the functioning of the Tribunal and concerning its sharing the expenses of the Tribunal.

4. The competence of the Tribunal may also be extended, with the approval of the General Assembly, to any other international organization or entity established by a treaty and participating in the common system of conditions of service, upon the terms set out in a special agreement between the organization or entity concerned and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Each such special agreement shall provide that the organization or entity concerned shall be bound by the judgements of the Tribunal and be responsible for the payment of any compensation awarded by the Tribunal in respect of a staff member of that organization or entity and shall include, inter alia, provisions concerning its participation in the administrative arrangements for the functioning of the Tribunal and concerning its sharing the expenses of the Tribunal.